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smol things  
**do** make  
a big  
difference.

our impact report, 2023.



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at its heart, smol  
is a company with  
**revolutionary**  
**visions.**



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back in 2018,  
we believed  
there was a  
better way  
to buy laundry  
detergent.

Big brands were static behemoths. They didn't innovate, they felt aloof, they didn't seem to be taking sustainability seriously. So we started a smol revolution to shake things up:

- Inventive, effective formulations
- Home delivery with personalised schedules
- Groundbreaking pack design
- Direct and meaningful engagement with consumers
- Fair prices

All great news for our customers PLUS we were going to be better for the planet. How? By coming together en masse.

**“We don’t need a handful of people doing zero waste perfectly. We need millions of people doing it imperfectly.”**

Anne-Marie Bonneau. Zero-Waste Chef.

Because when thousands of us make smol changes it soon adds up to a lot.

And how do we encourage thousands to change their cleaning habits?

By making it easy. By ensuring our products work brilliantly, with regular deliveries you never run out, with everyday fair prices, by giving customers control over their accounts, by educating and illustrating how smol swaps are more planet-friendly, by showing people how they are having an impact and encouraging them to do more.



# a note from Nick.

CEO and co-founder of smol



## smol was born of a desire to cut the bullsh\*t.

We wanted to create a business that spoke to its customers directly (like real people) without the marketing patter. For smol, that meant understanding the frustrating reality of laundry, sharing that with humour and providing practical solutions to the chore of buying detergent.

At its heart, smol is a company with revolutionary visions:

- one that cuts out the middleman with direct dialogue between ourselves and our customers.
- one that challenges the status-quo with new systems, products and design.
- one that fosters inclusivity, diversity, social responsibility and equality.
- one that successfully embraces remote working (well before Covid came along).
- one that makes a positive difference.

Success for smol happens when we hit all of the above and that remains our aim.

What has become apparent since launch is just how strongly the people who work at smol believe in these goals, and just how passionately our customers champion our ambition. It's one more example of how we can drive change when we all come together.



# what does impact mean to us?

Sustainability is on track to becoming a buzzword, and that's risky. There is still no single established or universally accepted definition of the term and that leads to 'woolliness'. As a team focused on doing things better, we prefer to talk about the IMPACT that we actually have; across everything we do.

Impact proves that a difference has been made. It is a tangible, measurable result rather than a set of intentions or promises.

It's more action, less ideology.

What we do and how we do it impacts:

- The environment
- Our customers
- Our team
- The wider community
- The industry and other businesses

If what we do inspires other brands and businesses to do more, to do better, we're even happier.



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rather than start from scratch, we used the **UN Sustainable Development Goals** to understand the big issues:



# our impact strategy

There's a LOT that needs to be done to take care of our planet and each other and the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a really good place to start. This set of goals tackles climate change, ecosystem protection, poverty, health, education, inequality and economic growth.

Maximising our impact means choosing where to focus. At smol, we've chosen four core areas where we know we have the best chance to make a positive difference:

1. Addressing climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. (SDG no.13).
2. Conscious consumption and production. Improve the way we use resources, reduce consumption, waste and pollution and shape a new circular economy. (SDG no.12).
3. Protecting ecosystems: our water and what lives in it, alongside conservation of the land. (SDGs 6, 14 & 15).
4. Reducing inequality and eradicating poverty. (SDGs 1 & 10).

our customers care about these areas too.



**Sue** I've been using smol laundry tabs and dishwasher tabs for some time now and would highly recommend them both AND ITS HELPING OUR PLANET. The lovely Smol people are so helpful and friendly love them almost as much I do do their products. Thank you Smol.



## Amazing love this product!

Smells great! Vegan and cruelty free! Love the nasties! Smells way better than ordinary was etc! Would recommend.



**Sammy** I bloody love that you REUSE THE BOTTLES and don't waste energy recycling them to make more!



**Plastic free** is important



**Beverley** I am giving it a go as really good reviews, fed up with all the wasted plastic and ignoring all the chemicals i am using...about time i embraced my eco side x



**Roz** Switched to smol a vegan/cruelty and plastic Very happy!



**Elaine** Lovely to see smol helping charities plus been eco friendly more companies need to take notice.



**Christine** I love savings on I'm doing m

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# our impact strategy

## our impact on the planet



Responsible consumption & production



## our impact on people



# planet impact.

## carbon emissions.

Why does it matter?



21,995

tonnes of carbon  
has been saved  
since launch.

In the year  
from Sept 2022  
to Aug 2023  
we saved 6,442  
tonnes of carbon.

Since the Industrial Revolution humans have been pumping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere at rates greater than the natural increase observed at the end of the last ice age 20,000 years ago. We're basically supercharging the natural greenhouse effect, causing global temperatures to rise. Rising temperatures threaten wildlife, habitats and biodiversity; they cause superstorms, droughts, heat waves and flooding. We've got to reduce our carbon emissions if we want to continue on a habitable planet.

- **Concentrated formulations make our products smaller and our packs lighter. Same amount of cleaning but much less weight and far less packaging. Our footprint shrinks.**
- **Refill systems can cut our carbon by over 90%. No need to ship heavy bottles of product, just rehydrate a tiny tablet with water in your home.**
- **Our Rinse & Return scheme for our washing up liquid, stain gel and fabric conditioner creates a loop. A high % of a bottled product's carbon comes from manufacturing the plastic bottle. So let's reuse it once it exists. Circularity!**
- **Estimates vary across recycling systems, but researchers agree that making bottles from recycled plastic cuts over 30% of the carbon that virgin plastic manufacturing produces.**

- **Grouping together deliveries into one parcel with our smol + option. Launched in 2023, we reckon the first year could see over 50 tonnes of carbon saved.**
- **Sharing knowledge with our customers also cuts our carbon. For example, we know almost three quarters of our laundry capsule's footprint comes at the stage where it's used to do the laundry - so suggesting cooler wash cycles to our customers is a super easy and super effective way to cut carbon. Of course this is something the big brands (like Ariel) are finally championing... but our #washwell campaign takes things further. We encourage our customers to actually wash a bit LESS! Consume less of our product? Yes please!**

Integral to our understanding and management of our carbon emissions is learning the LCA of all our products. This is a study on the environmental impact of any product throughout its whole life cycle. From start to finish. Everything. It's a treasure trove of carbon data and allows us to identify areas where we can improve.

### What's next?

In the coming year we will be launching carton refills to further cut carbon vs plastic bottles. We will also expand our refillable tablet range with new spray products and a hand wash.



# planet impact.

## plastic.

### Why does it matter?

It's fair to say as a society we overuse plastic (particularly single-use plastic) without thinking enough about the consequences. Plastic pollution is found in every corner of the planet. And sadly, recycling plastic is extremely inefficient – only 9% of the plastic ever produced has been recycled, and around 60% of plastic is now discarded in landfills and oceans.

Reducing its use is essential. This will lessen the amount of new raw materials needed thereby cutting pollution too, save energy and also reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

### Did you know...

- In 2022, the laundry industry was responsible for over 70 million packs of laundry plastic going to waste in the UK
- In the same year, over 95 million plastic packs from dishwasher tablets went to waste
- the average UK household uses 25 plastic cleaning spray bottles per year

In the UK, only 12% of plastic is recycled. The infrastructure simply isn't there. Making a plastic recyclable is NOT the answer.

As businesses using plastic, we need to be responsible for it, so at smol we're all about reducing our need for plastic in the first place.

- **Reduce.** Concentrated formulations mean our packs can be smaller which in turn reduces our demand for plastic.
- **Replace.** 2020 saw us launch the world's first plastic-free packaging for laundry capsules and dishwasher tablets. It's just cardboard. And we've just done the same with our new anti-plastic anti-perspirant – a 100% card pack.
- **Reuse.** Our Rinse & Return scheme for our washing up liquid, stain gel and fabric conditioner creates a loop that lets us reuse bottles. That cuts our need for more plastic.
- **Refills systems** for our surface sprays mean customers keep one bottle for life as opposed to up to 25 single-use plastic cleaning spray bottles in the average year.
- Where we currently must use plastic bottles for a liquid (e.g. fabric conditioner) we make sure it's 100% Post Consumer Recycled plastic using material that's already been produced.

### What's next?

In the coming year we'll continue to build our personal care range to tackle the vast amounts of single-use plastic that spills from our bathrooms. Every year UK adults create over 86k tonnes of plastic waste from personal care products.\* There are HUGE plastic savings to be made here and 81% of us want plastic-free alternatives... so we're on a mission to help.

In the household range we're introducing our brand new carton refills to further cut our reliance on plastic. As customers keep their original plastic bottles for life, we'll send refills in recyclable cartons and radically cut the weight of plastic required.



1,528

tonnes of plastic  
has been saved  
since launch.

In the year  
from Sept 2022  
to August 2023, we  
saved 534 tonnes  
of plastic.



# planet impact.

## toxicity.

Why does it matter?



3,951

tonnes of chemicals  
has been saved  
since launch.

In the year  
from Sept 2022  
to August 2023 we  
saved 1,175 tonnes  
of chemicals.

Almost all cleaning products contain chemicals to deliver the performance that we all want. But growing evidence now suggests chemical pollution has exceeded safe limits globally. Humans have extensively used and released chemicals so that today, even our bodies are contaminated with a large number— some at levels damaging to health. There are also serious ramifications for our environment, not least our water systems.

- **Concentrated formulations don't mean we are adding in more chemicals per dose, it just means we are removing all unnecessary fillers and water.**
- **Dry matter testing shows for example a smol bio capsule uses 10.7g of chemical dry matter per wash whereas an Ariel pod uses 17.8g per wash.**
- **Our fabric conditioner is just 8ml per dose, vs the big brands at a whopping 35ml per dose**
- **Removing non essential ingredients e.g. removing SLS from our toothpaste means we use only what is necessary and leave out what isn't required.**

### What's next?

We're looking at more plant based packaging materials as well as plant based ingredients for our products. In the UK there is no definition of

toxic or non toxic cleaning products, so we're auditing our ingredients one by one and looking at what else we can take out or replace, whilst still guaranteeing great performance.



**A side note - what's this aquatic life warning and why does smol carry it?**

The warning is an EU legal requirement for very concentrated soaps and detergents. Our formulations are incredibly concentrated to minimise carbon transport emissions. If we diluted our products down with fillers (as many brands do) it would not require this label - you would however have to use more product per clean and your carbon footprint would increase.

Once diluted for use, the warning no longer applies.

It is predominantly there to provide instruction should there be a catastrophic/undiluted/ concentrated exposure to the environment whereby a large quantity entered the water ways, for example as the result of an industrial accident. This warning is based on a very unrealistic scenario.



# planet impact.

## responsible consumption & production

Our #washwell campaign speaks directly to our customers about smart consumption around household cleaning and the smol changes we can make to use less energy, less water, cut carbon AND OUR BILLS.

- **Take a load off and just run machines when they're full.** Half loads use over half the energy and water of full loads and 49% of us run half loads at least once every week.\* If every UK home ditched one 40°C laundry load per month, we'd save enough energy to heat 43k households for a year and enough water to fill 7k Olympic-sized pools.\*\*
- **Only wash when dirty because we're over-laundering** most of our clothes. Less washing means less energy, water and detergent used PLUS a lower carbon footprint. We share LOTS of no-wash washing tips via emails, socials and on our blogs.
- **Turn down the temperature** because 60% of our laundry's carbon footprint comes from heating the water. According to Which?, if the UK switched from 40°C washes to 30°C, it would be the equivalent of taking almost 400,000k cars off the road. smol bio detergent has been designed to work brilliantly at these cooler temperatures.
- **Just hang out.** Tumble dryers are energy hungry so line drying will drastically cut your carbon. We share LOTS of no tumble drying tips via emails, socials and on our blogs.

Conscious Production runs throughout our manufacturing.

- Our supplier audit helps us understand all of our suppliers, how they operate, the materials they use and how they look after their own staff. We're interested in everything from their energy sources and waste management, through to living wage and modern slavery policies.
- **Certification.** As we grow, and the "greenwashing" world gets murkier and murkier, we look to certifications to ensure we are transparent and rigorous in our claims:

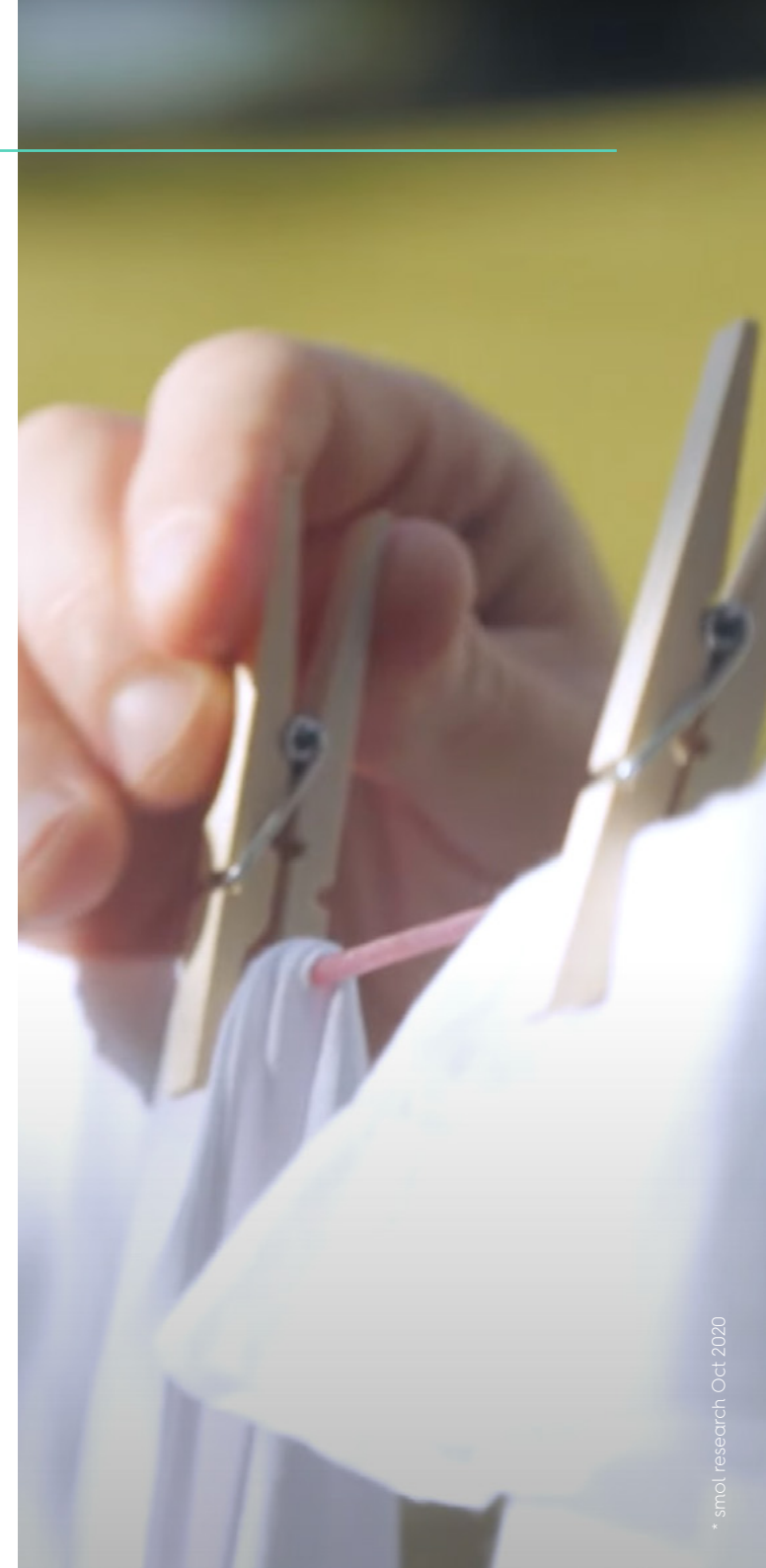
> Vegan. We do not use animal ingredients or derivatives in our formulations. We are in the process of gaining certification from **Vegan Society**.

> **Flustix** have certified our laundry capsules and dishwasher tablets plastic-free.

> **Leaping Bunny** accreditation from Cruelty Free International confirms the fact that we do not test on animals, allow others to on our behalf or sell in countries that still require animal testing.

> Whenever we use Palm Oil or its derivatives we ensure these are from sources that are certified under the Roundtable for Responsible Palm Oil. The **RSPO** leads groups such as WWF, Greenpeace and the UN to put systems in place that ensure oil palm trees are only farmed on land that has been previously cleared (or doesn't require deforestation).

> All our cardboard packaging comes from Forest Stewardship Council approved sources. The **FSC** helps protect animal habitats, maintains biodiversity, protects old growth trees, ensures zero deforestation, protects the rights of Indigenous Peoples and ensures fair wages/safe work environments for workers.





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# people impact.

## fairness & equality.

The people at smol are integral to ensuring change continues. Everyone must feel welcome and supported which demands a social responsibility from our management that will champion equality.

smol commits to:

- Ensuring quality job opportunities for those who face barriers to employment.
- Giving people the chance to build up work skills, gain independence and grow self-esteem. Our team have used their volunteering days in so many different ways; supporting community events, training to be a breastfeeding support worker, scribing for GCSE exams and volunteering at local tech/digital support centres.
- Paying a real living wage to ensure employees feel valued and motivated.
- Combating modern slavery and human trafficking within our operations and supply chains.
- Ending poverty in all its forms.

Supporting those who may face barriers to employment.

- Release on Temporary Leave (ROTL) placements with a local prison to provide work experience for those approaching parole to help them move forward following release. This also supports mental wellbeing, builds confidence and social skills.
- Royal British Legion - building a partnership with RBLI Employment Team to offer work opportunities to ex-service people and their families in the Kent area (very early days on this one!).

Benefits for our team.

- Focusing on complete wellbeing - physical, mental & financial wellbeing.
- Enhanced paid leave including sick pay, holiday, welfare/compassionate leave, maternity and paternity pay.
- Going the extra mile to support people to return to work following long-term illness or injury.
- All of our team have a volunteer day to use as they wish - helping us to support causes close to home and connect with life outside of work.



# people impact.

## community support

Ongoing work with grassroots charity The Hygiene Bank is one way we work to end hygiene poverty. Over 1 in 5 of us live in poverty but EVERYONE has the right to feel clean.

Donate a wash  
Activating donate a wash on a smol plan adds 30p to each order as it processes. We then donate 2 laundry capsules to The Hygiene Bank.



**Elizabeth** This is something I had never even thought about. Thank you for raising the issue and taking action to help. I've added a donation to my dishwasher and laundry accounts.



# 535,248

laundry washes donated to The Hygiene Bank since launch.



## suds in schools

Our work with The Hygiene Bank highlighted the issues schoolchildren are facing through hygiene poverty.

8 in 10 primary school teachers have witnessed a rise in the number of children attending school unwashed or wearing unclean uniform in the last 5 years and have found themselves increasingly intervening (one third of teachers regularly buy their pupils toiletry essentials).

smol launched Suds in Schools in November 2021 on Crowdfunder, with a £10k goal to install mini-laundrettes into UK schools which we would supply ongoing with smol laundry capsules.

By December of that year, we had raised a STAGGERING £55k and our first laundrette went into a Blackpool primary school. More machines followed and we now have over 55 UK sites throughout the UK with more on the way.

In September 2023 we're going again on another wave of fundraising and are determined to keep offering support, wherever it is needed. 2024 will see us equip more schools and build a community between them.





# people impact.

## diversity & inclusion

At smol we celebrate diversity and foster inclusivity; everyone must feel welcome and trusted.

- In 2022 we ran our first Diversity & Inclusion survey and Engagement surveys, with over 70% and 85% response respectively from the team. This feedback has given us a brilliant base to really know our team and to set foundations so that diversity and inclusion lives within every aspect of our business.
- Monthly team calls are led by different members of the team and keep everyone connected to business results and what we're up to. All company information is made available to all team members including financial reporting.
- Monthly smol superstars award - peer nominated to recognise colleagues and their great work.
- Our smol voice sessions and annual away day (smol fest!) are vital to bringing our whole team together, to connect, learn and share.
- Partnering with "Powered by Diversity" to provide monthly lunchtime events. These are open to the whole team and help us appreciate and educate ourselves on different people and experiences.
- We operate a blind recruitment process, taking all identifying information off CV's and applications to smol. This helps our team evaluate people on their skills and experience instead of factors that can lead to biased decisions.

- **Inclusive benefits and policies support both the physical and mental health of our team - including mental health and stress awareness training for our managers. We've been running a training programme for managers at our production site, to upskill and build confidence as well as offering individual coaching plans where needed.**

### Outside of smol?

We're making sure our website, marketing and products are accessible to as many people as possible and using WCAG AA compliance as our target.

### What next?

We'll be repeating our D & I and Engagement Surveys in Autumn 2023 to track our progress, and reporting results on these publicly, as well as our gender pay gap report. Watch this space!





# best ethics & governance.



We launched smol with a clear mission to grow a business that does good for the environment, the community and our teams.

smol is signed up to the Better Business Act. We firmly believe that our role is to serve our community and environment, as well as our shareholders. We also submitted our BCorp assessment in 2022 and respect the thoroughness of the process. We didn't anticipate that a few of our more progressive initiatives would generate a bit of head scratching for the BCorp assessment team but we're really hoping that we'll complete this process soon and add BCorp to our certification page. Cross fingers!

Want to know more about our shareholders? Ever wondered who owns smol?

Our investors not only include our two co-founders, but also different investment groups including Balderton, Eight Roads, Google Ventures, Jam Jar investments and Latitude. A Board meeting is held every two months.

If you want to know more about our ownership, our ethics and the way we run our business - feel free to drop us a line.



# proud as punch.

What are we really proud of this year?

We're determined to build a very different, direct and open relationship with our customers. Our Customer Service team has responded to a whopping 190,000 customer emails this year - one by one. So we're thrilled that our team has been recognised (again!) by Feefo with a Diamond Trusted Service award.



**Platinum Trusted  
Service Award**

2023 **feefo**

**THE TIMES**  
**THE SUNDAY TIMES**

We were super chuffed to be included in The Times "UK start-ups to watch" in June 2023. Can we make it into their "top 100" in 2024?

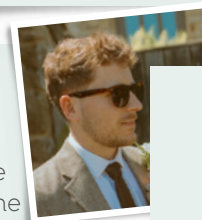
"Launching our personal care range, it was incredible to see teams across the company working together to make such a big and complicated product launch look so smooth and easy always in awe of the team comradery at smol" **Bezza, Senior Videographer and Content Creator**



"It's sometimes difficult to fully understand the harm that laundry chemicals have on the environment and I feel so much pride to work at smol, a business actively trying to make a change in this area." **Jess Atkinson, Innovation Manager**



"The introduction of smol+ has had the biggest operational change to our Fulfilment Department we have ever seen. I'm extremely proud of the Fulfilment team for the way they have adapted and flourished as a team to send out over 55,000 Bulk Orders in just a few months, while not losing focus on quality, performance or the other thousands of single order packs they still dispatch every day". **Cam, our smol Fulfilment Manager**



"I am so proud of our work with The Hygiene Bank and our Suds in Schools campaign. Knowing that we are actually DOING something to help. It's such a simple idea, so obvious, but makes such a huge difference to the schools and families involved." **Hilary, from our marketing team.**

"The innovation that we've brought in the last year, both in terms of new products and in increasing the scale of what we do has been truly inspiring. It's a great feeling to know that every new customer and every new product launch has the chance to displace a less sustainable or ethical alternative. I'm very proud of the fact that we're committed to making an impact on the mainstream consumer, not just serving a premium niche." **Danny, Product team**

"We've made some significant changes to the way we value web accessibility as a business and implemented changes to the live site in order to assist our users. Although web accessibility doesn't always feel glamorous, it makes a huge difference to a proportion of our users and is without a doubt the right thing to do." **Tamzin, UI Designer**



"I'm proudest of the sheer number of initiatives and pace of change that we've managed to achieve. All while keeping reducing the impact on the planet first in our minds. From new delivery services to new products to new ways to give back, we've managed to do a huge amount in the last 12 months." **Neil, Growth team**





**Beneficial on every level**

Brilliant company, great morals. Products are perfect, and help save money and time ✓

**smol**

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